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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by the Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[01 February 2016]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Stop Torture and Violation in Bahrain

Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture would like to kindly draw your attention to the latest developments in Bahrain's human rights situation and to update you on the pertinent issues, specifically the infringement on freedoms of opinion, assembly, and beliefs, the right of human rights and political activists, systematic torture practices, and the issues of death penalties and stripping of nationality.

The joint statement your country signed on Bahrain in June 2015 specifically mentioned many of these issues, yet there have been no significant advances towards resolving the issues. The human rights situation has largely regressed with widespread clampdown on human rights defenders, journalists, and activists, including members of the opposition, like the imprisonment of Sheikh Ali Salman (Wefaq's Secretary General), Ebrahim Sharif (former Wa'ad SG) and Majid Milad (former Manama Municipality Council Chairman and member of Wefaq's General Secretariat). Activists like Nabeel Rajab have been barred from travelling abroad despite medical requirements, whilst family members of Bahrainis that died in custody, like AbdulkarimFakhrawi's nephews, have been unlawfully targeted and detained.

The judiciary has been an obstacle to improvements, with judges appointed by the ruling family issuing obscure and ungrounded judgments and sentences. This has caused other violations to flow, especially against the Jaw prisoners, who have additionally been handed 15-years sentences for involvement in the prison protests.

Primarily, the Bahraini Government has largely failed to implement the accepted recommendations posed by the Bahrain Independent Commission Inquiry (BICI) (published in November 2011). Some cosmetic improvements have been carried out, but the human rights violations are largely at the level it was at 2011 – with deteriorations occurring in many other aspects.

Furthermore, the Special Rapporteur on Peaceful Assembly has yet to be granted admission to Bahrain since 2011. The opposition's demands to peacefully assemble have continuously been ignored with the authorities opting to unnecessary violent interventions. Similarly, the Bahraini authorities have prohibited the Special Rapporteur on Torture from carrying out his mandated obligations by barring visits since 2011, while the practices of torture in prisons and detention centres continues.

With the increasing severity of the violations since the BICI report, we urge you to nominate a Special Rapporteur to Bahrain due to the deliberate noncompliance with international obligations and agreements as well as the non-adherence to international processes. We ask you to significantly pressure the Bahraini authorities to ensure the BICI and UPR recommendations are expeditiously implemented, and to push for the following:

1- We urge you to pressure the Bahraini Government to grant the entrance of the Special Rapporteurs on Peaceful Assembly and Torture, so that they may carry out their mandated obligations. In addition, allow independent human rights organisations representatives to enter the country unhindered to examine the human rights situation and provide redress to victims.

2- Drive for the release of all prisoners of conscience, with prominent political and human rights figures at the forefront, without reprisals or obligations.

3- Push the Bahraini authorities to reconsider the death penalty sentences handed out post-2011 Bahraini uprising, as there is significant evidence and indications that demonstrate they are politically motivated and flawed.

4- Urge the Bahraini authorities to cease all politically motivated trials and drop all charges against peaceful activists, to establish a positive environment that allows for meaningful dialogue between the opposition and the Bahraini Government.

5- Create a protective environment to safeguard human rights defenders active in Bahrain, activists, and non-government organizations.

6- Urge the UN Human Rights Council and involved bodies to prevent countries like Bahrain, which lack justice and fairness in the judicial system and have a history of trial manipulation, from issuing and carrying out death penalties, specifically against political and human rights activists.

7- We also implore you to call for the establishment of a UN commissioned fact-finding committee to investigate the reported violations.